



## Inspirational Health Stories

### Dale Peterson from McDonough, Georgia

In 2002, at the age of 70, I was diagnosed with Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia, a rare disorder characterized by the overproduction of an IgM protein in the bone marrow. Symptoms are anemia and hyperviscosity. Eight rounds of chemotherapy put the disease into remission.

I then purchased a retirement home in a neighborhood where the property was maintained by the homeowner's association and adopted a watch-and-wait attitude. It was very pleasant not having to mow or fertilize the lawn, but the sedentary lifestyle was causing me to become more overweight and less energetic. Selective dieting did not result in any loss of weight.

My wife and I decided to join the aerobics classes at the Henry County Senior Center to improve our overall health. The classes met for one hour three times each week. Benefits were realized almost immediately. I began to feel much better and had considerably more energy. Exercising under the leadership of a capable instructor with a group of other seniors in an esthetic environment proved to be much more enjoyable than exercising at home. This routine better ensured that you exercised the necessary number of hours each week. An additional plus was meeting and exercising with many interesting people while forming new friendships.

Exercise alone, however, did not result in sufficient weight loss. I was 15 pounds overweight and diagnosed as being insulin resistant, a condition that exists before the onset of adult diabetes. It also causes a significant increase in the risk of atherosclerosis. My family doctor



placed me on a modified diet and prescribed 6 hours of exercise each week. It was either that or medication. Within three weeks the combination of diet and exercise resulted in the loss of the excess weight. I will not know until my next physical how much the threat of diabetes is reduced. However, the latest blood analysis found the levels of triglycerides (55) and cholesterol (156) to be optimal.

One of my best decisions was to participate in the aerobics classes at the Senior Center. After two years in the exercise program, I have regained the feeling of vitality that I enjoyed when I was much younger and I am again making long-range plans.

